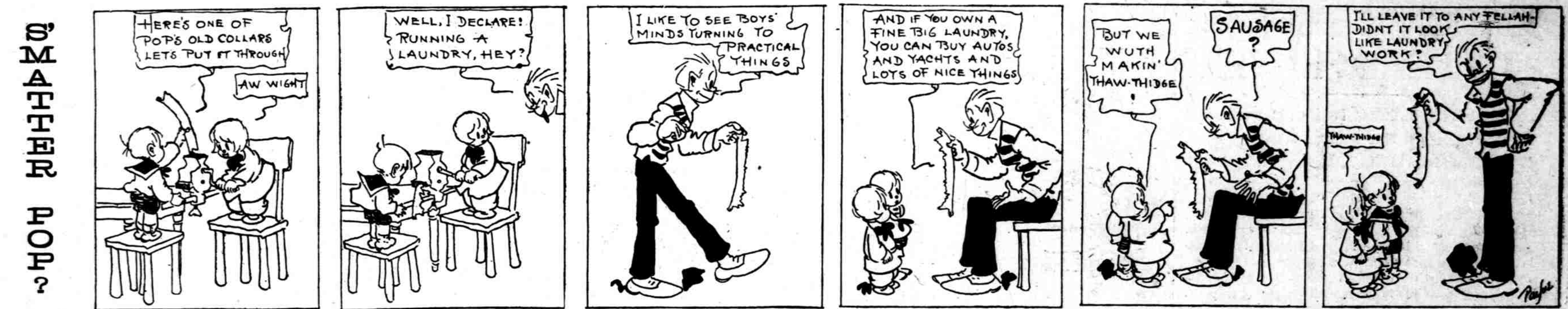


WELL, I DECLARE! RUNNING A LAUNDRY, HEY?

HOME

By ISABEL OSTRANDER

PAGES



THE HERITAGE OF CAIN

A GREAT BIG THRILLING STORY

BY ISABEL OSTRANDER

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

At the Adirondack lodge of Dyrast Van Rensselaer and his wife Victoria are gathered Dyrast's brother Robin, Madge Ashley, a divorcee; Bertram and Lucille Goodall and Philip Merriman. Dyrast is a close student of heredity, and tells the party he believes at least one criminal's descendants will develop criminal instincts. Victoria shudders at her husband's views and at anti-social expressions of her own. Lucille gives Victoria money for a purpose unknown to her husband. When Victoria does not appear for breakfast Madge goes to her room and finds her murdered.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

"BUT," Dyrast's tones were cold and firmly quiet, and each word fell with an air of finality after the other man's excited expostulation—"the fact remains that there must have been a motive, since the crime was actually committed. Therefore, unless we accept the theory of homicidal mania for which we have not one shred of substantiating evidence, we must search for that motive. Where will I be able to locate Mr. Paul Hildreth?"

"When he's in town he lives at the Coronet Club—he deals on the Street in a conservative way, now and then through Snaft, Hinchings & Co.; they might know where he is, if he's away; but, honestly, I couldn't say he's implicated in any possible manner."

"He's a man of breeding, of refined instincts—if he had had any thought of murdering poor Victoria, wouldn't he have gone about it in a different manner? If it was not a maniac who killed this poor girl it must have been a brute of the lowest order. The manner in which the crime was committed was such an abominably brutal one, when they have degraded themselves to the point of murder, can be as revolting and savage as the lowest specimen of humanity."

"Now, may I ask you to phone your telegram to the nearest station, addressed to Mr. Paul Hildreth at his club, and inform him merely of Mrs. Van Rensselaer's sudden death?"

"Yes. Shall I ask him to come to us?"

"No. Leave that to his own discretion. His behavior will be significant enough. See! Mrs. Ashley is beckoning. Let us go in. I know I needn't caution you to silence about this."

They returned indoors and found Madge marshaling them all more or less reluctantly into the dining room, where a midday meal was laid before them.

Realizing the necessity of retaining all their strength to endure the grief and strain of the ordeal through which they were passing, they forced themselves to eat hastily and in silence.

The presence of the same staid, round-eyed kitchen maid who had previously served them, and another, a recruit from the household, who looked still more curious and ill at ease, precluded any conversation on the subject which filled their thoughts to the exclusion of all else.

"When the ghastly, interminable meal was over and the servants had withdrawn, Franklin Yorke drew Mrs. Goodall quietly aside to a deep window recess. Noticing her obvious nervousness and trepidation, he began to sympathize with a slight, ingratiating smile:

"You were such a good friend of Mrs. Van Rensselaer's, I wonder if you can help me to find out where she engages her servants, Mrs. Goodall?"

Lucille gave a little gasp of relief. "Why, of course, I can," she answered quickly. "She sends to the same agency I do—Mrs. Kilmer's on Sixth avenue, above Forty-fifth street. They employ every kind of servant, from butlers to scullery maids."

"Do you know by any chance, if the maid who disappeared this morning was engaged from Mrs. Kilmer's?"

"Yes, she was. I was here when Della—the last housemaid—left suddenly, and Victoria telegraphed for this one."

"Did you notice her particularly?"

"Only to see she was terrible pretty. I wouldn't have her in my house—not that Bert—Mr. Goodall—would ever give a passing thought to a person of that sort; but he might be apt to lose his appetite and neglect his food if anyone quite so thoroughly good-looking waited upon him."

"Did she seem to be a well-trained servant?"

"Oh! simply perfect! Quiet and quick, and respectful—that is, the little I saw of her."

"You would know her again if you should see her?"

"Why, of course, I would. There wasn't anything especially distinctive about her that I can describe, but she made an unusually strong impression in all the dry, misty, psychological subjects he is forever deeply engrossed in. That is, until lately."

"And lately I suppose Mrs. Van Rensselaer has tired of such abstract study?" he asked, watching her narrowly.

"No, not tired; but almost childishly opposed to it. She hated to discuss it."

and used to get terribly agitated when it was brought into conversation. Then she's been so depressed and low-spirited lately that I began to think she was jealous of Dyrast's almost complete absorption in his researches."

"Merely because she seemed depressed, as you say, and evinced an aversion for Mr. Van Rensselaer's life-work?"

"No, not alone that; replied Lucille cautiously and hesitatingly; "but she commenced last winter—just about the time I began first to notice her unhappy moods—to rush everywhere feverishly."

"She had never before seemed to care very much for society in general; and now she didn't give herself an hour's rest the whole season, and by the time spring came she was nervous and wild-eyed, and she looked as if she was made up for her husband, and hated his work because it kept him so many hours from her."

"And up here—has she seemed better?"

"Oh! ever so much better. She got to look quite her old self again, only—well, she seemed to be more unhappy than ever; and she occasionally seemed to be light-hearted and cheerful, I could tell that it was almost hysterically forced."

"Did you speak to Mrs. Van Rensselaer about it?" The question came more sharply and indignantly than the cause of her unhappiness.

Lucille halted her confidential outpouring of words and looked almost piously at her husband.

"No-o-o," she said at last, slowly and hesitatingly.

"Mrs. Goodall, if you and Mrs. Van Rensselaer were such intimate friends, and you saw she was troubled, wouldn't it have been natural for you to ask the cause of her unhappiness?"

"No, it wouldn't," said Lucille flatly. "The length of his question had given me a loophole of escape from further confidences to present itself. She had no intention of telling him anything whatever concerning her conversation of the previous day with Victoria of the writing of the check."

It might reflect the least bit on her dead friend, although just how she was unable to see. Anyway, she felt quite certain it had no bearing on the tragedy.

"Do you think," she continued, "that I would want anyone, no matter how close a friend, to come to me and offer sympathy and asking questions if my husband was neglecting me for some old science? It's a very delicate thing to meddle sympathetically and successfully in anyone's domestic affairs."

"You are absolutely certain then that the only cause for Mrs. Van Rensselaer's troubled mind lay in her husband's neglect of her for his studies?"

"Yes," replied Lucille, the slight trembling of her voice betraying the frank surprise of her widely-opened eyes. "What other cause could there be?"

Franklin Yorke was silent for a moment. That the young person before him was deliberately withholding some incident connected with her friend's condition or mental state was obvious.

It was equally obvious that she was quite and determined not to divulge anything for the time being he was content to allow the question to rest.

"You are acquainted, I believe, with Paul Hildreth, Mrs. Van Rensselaer's cousin?" he asked, changing the subject without preamble.

"Oh," Lucille gave a little gasp of surprise at the suddenness with which her none too agile thoughts were turned to her cousin; then she bubbled on enthusiastically:

"Yes, indeed; Paul is one of our oldest friends. He's a perfect dear! All the girls simply rave about him. Of course, he hasn't any money—none of the charming men have, or else they're married, or something, but he's terribly attractive. Bertram—Mr. Goodall—likes him immensely, and I adore him."

"He will help you with your money wants now," said Yorke quietly, with his eyes fixed upon hers.

"Oh! how nice for him. But I don't!"

"Did you not know that the death of Mrs. Van Rensselaer would result in possession of a large sum of money?"

"Why I'd forgotten that. Of course it does. Her father's money."

"Terribly he must feel to profit by such a tragedy! He was so genuinely fond of poor, darling Victoria, I suppose it never once entered his head that she would die and he inherit that estate."

"Possibly not," observed Yorke, dryly.

Lucille's face lifted a little as a new thought presented itself to her.

"Oh," she cried, "perhaps now he can marry."

The sharp, prolonged ringing of the telephone bell cleaved her sentence in half, and she sat with her head bristling, listening to Robin's hurried footsteps down the hall. They heard the faint click of the receiver as he took it from the hook, and then his voice came over the wire.

"Yes, this is 'The Lair'—yes, Mr. Van Rensselaer's. Who are you?"

"Oh! 'The Lair' at Fifth Avenue. Mr. Blaisdell? You have a telegram for Mr. Frederick Blaisdell? Hold the wire. Freddie, wire for you! Come here, and they'll repeat it to you over the phone."

Lucille Goodall and Franklin Yorke both had their eyes fixed on the place at the telephone. They stood immovably while they saw the great interest in his face change to a look of blank horror and dismay.

"Will you—repeat that, please?" he gasped in a voice husky with emotion. The message, whatever it was, must have come to him over the wire, for he had not time to pick up the receiver with a trembling hand and to hand it to Robin. His face drawn to a ghastly white.

"I must go," he panted hoarsely. "I must go!"

must go at once. I—I am more than sorry that I cannot stay and see you through, Robin. Don't think me a low-spirited fellow, but I am in a terrible trouble. I cannot explain, but I'm afraid a tragedy has come to me, too—Gee! As great a tragedy as yours!"

CHAPTER VII.

DURING the next few hours which intervened between the sudden mysterious exit of Frederick Blaisdell and the arrival of the coroner and his detectives and police from Albany, Franklin Yorke seemed to be everywhere at once.

He thoroughly searched the room of the missing housemaid, but discovered nothing save one significant fact. The caps, aprons, cuffs and collars, although in perfect condition, showed signs of frequent laundering.

The undershirts, shoes and one or two simple gowns and shirt waists which completed the modest wardrobe were all absolutely new, and bore no identifying mark of manufacture or shop in which they might have been purchased. The trunk also was brand new and of the cheapest, most ordinary grade.

The toilet articles were of the simplest, and there was not one postal card, letter, photograph or personal memento of the sort of which the usual servant possesses a little hoard.

He examined the trunk again—bore no label of any express company; merely a tag showing that it had been shipped from the Grand Central Station in New York, and which bore, in a round, laborious, childish hand, the name, "Mary Kelly."

He descended to the servants' quarters and questioned them, endeavoring to unduly arouse their already clamorous curiosity and alarm.

From the gardeners, guides and coachmen he elicited little information. They didn't know anything about the new maid, and hardly spoken to them; they hadn't seen her that morning; hadn't known of her departure until the writing of the check.

It might reflect the least bit on her dead friend, although just how she was unable to see. Anyway, she felt quite certain it had no bearing on the tragedy.

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There was a general search made for her by the cook and kitchen maid; and couldn't hazard an opinion as to where she could have gone to, as there wasn't a house for miles except the Goodalls' lodge.

As to Jacques, although he had for the past three seasons been chief guide for Mr. Van Rensselaer, they knew next to nothing about him. He seemed to have been a morose, taciturn individual, keeping for the most part sullenly to himself. They'd noticed him looking at the girl, but they had not seen them talking together.

The laundress and kitchen maid were equally unsatisfactory. The former was too hysterical and insistently concerned with the mystery which pervaded the house, and the latter too dumb from stupidity and blind trepidation to reply intelligently to Franklin Yorke's patient queries. Only Ellen Comer, the cook, proved a valuable witness.

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FNID CONSTABLES LAX IN DUTIES

Grand Jurors Reporting at Hyattsville Declare Many Are Inefficient.

HYATTSVILLE, Md., Oct. 18.—The grand jury of the October term of the circuit court for Prince George county, which has been sitting at Upper Marlboro for the past two weeks, adjourned yesterday afternoon. During the time it has been in session it reports that it has examined fifteen cases, 108 witnesses, made forty-four presentations and four true bills. Several cases were dismissed for want of sufficient evidence to present prima facie cases. In their report the grand jury complained that the sheriff, Arthur B. Suit, and Deputy Sheriff Ogilvie for their command-

able promptness in securing the grand jury witnesses. They also reported to the court that "the efficiency of the majority of the constables in the several districts has not increased, and in many cases these officers showed a wonderful lack of knowledge of the laws and their duties in enforcing them. There also seemed to be a lack of system somewhere in keeping a correct list of who are and who are not constables. In some instances constables have failed to appear before our body until they were summoned by the sheriff."

The Guild of the Pinkney Memorial Episcopal Church will meet Monday in the Sunday school room of that church. After the transaction of business refreshments will be served.

Augustus Schneider, of Sibley avenue, who has been spending the past month in Cincinnati, has returned to his home here.

Mrs. J. L. King, of Cedar street, is visiting relatives at Lima, Ohio.

Extension of letter carrier service to small towns with 1,000 population, now entitled to that privilege, was proposed in a House resolution introduced yesterday by Congressman Bailey of Pennsylvania. He would appropriate \$10,000,000 for the work.

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Adamson Sees Way Out of Tolls Controversy

A way out of the Panama canal tolls controversy is seen in the plan of Congressman Adamson, chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to introduce a bill suspending indefinitely the operation of the provision granting free tolls to ships engaged in the coastwise trade of the United States.

Mr. Adamson is now preparing such a bill and soon will introduce it. While no such admission is made, it is believed that the chairman of the House committee is not acting entirely independent of the Administration viewpoint and it is probable the President will approve the compromise suggestion. Under the Adamson bill there would be no outright repeal of the free tolls provision, but all ships would pay tolls until it is ascertained whether the canal is self-supporting without the aid of fees from American ships, and until pending diplomatic negotiations are concluded.

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